



KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION

BOARD NOTES

Volume 13, No. 3 Report of the June 8-9, 2005, Regular Meeting

BOARD APPROVES CHANGES TO CATS ASSESSMENT

At its June meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education approved changes to the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) that will be the basis on which the new Request for Proposals (RFP) for CATS beginning in 2007 is written. Kentucky Department of Education staff indicated to the Board that the goal is to issue the RFP by August 2005 with a decision by the Board on the chosen vendor(s) by January 2006.

The model approved by the Board to guide the drafting of the RFP was based on the following ten directional statements:

1. The KBE has directed the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to improve the Kentucky Core Content for Assessment.

At the Board's direction, KDE staff has undergone a thorough process of improving the Core Content for Assessment - to make it clearer and more focused, to provide additional cognitive clarity, and to align it with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the American Diploma Project (ADP), the ACT, and other national work. The revised Core Content will serve as the basis for the new test design.

2. The KBE will expand the purpose of CATS beyond school accountability to include additional student-based measures.

The KBE supports a new test design that will be based on a number of common items taken by all students that will be scored and released to schools, supplemented by matrix items that are necessary to assure content coverage, to equate the test across forms and



for pre-testing purposes. The common items could be used to provide instructional information to teachers that could be compared across all students in their class and that could be used as determined appropriate by local school districts to measure student accountability.

3. The KBE approves moving from 100% per year Core Content coverage to a model that would allow more flexibility (a. 100%-85% or b. one or two years).

The Board is willing to look at less than 100% coverage of core content in a single year but would not likely approve a model that allowed for less than 80 – 85% coverage. The Board wishes to ensure that teachers are provided with clear and sufficient information about what is “fair game” for the assessment so that they do not feel they must guess what to teach.

4. The KBE prefers that the KCCT test design include a core of common items to provide additional student level results and matrix items for coverage of core content, equating and pretesting.

The Board is committed to the concept of inclusion of both common and matrix items. The Board also strongly recommends that staff carefully consider the numbers of common and matrix open response and multiple-choice items to assure KDE has achieved the minimum amount of testing time necessary to assure valid and reliable assessment of students and to achieve the goals and priorities of the KBE. To this end, the Board has directed staff to maximize the use of multiple-choice items to assess higher order thinking skills.

5. The KBE wishes to continue their emphasis on higher order thinking skills, but adjust the weighting structure to allow for greater weight to be given to multiple-choice items, given their greater relative numbers on the assessment than in the past.

As the number of open response questions on the assessment decreases, the Board understands that it is less likely that the NTAPAA will support the current weighting of 67% for the open response and 33% for the multiple choice items. Thus, the Board expresses a preference for a 50% – 50% weighting for open response and multiple-choice items, understanding that the level of difficulty of the multiple-choice items and their use to assess higher-order thinking skills will increase.

6. If possible, the KBE wishes the state to pursue embedding a NRT within the KCCT for a longitudinal measure in Reading and Mathematics.

The Board understands that Kentucky’s participation in the National Governor’s Association’s Center for Best Practices *Honor States Grant Program* may in the future allow for the fourteen (14) states involved to work together to provide different mechanisms for norming. The Board is willing to look at different options for providing the NRT component and is supportive of bidding the NRT both as a separate, stand alone process and an embedded process to see the time, cost and processes required for each option.

7. The KBE wishes staff to initiate pilot studies to develop and/or identify assessment approaches in Arts and Humanities and Practical Living/Vocational Studies that will address what students do as well as what they know in these areas.

The Board supports bidding both a new means to assess these areas as well as including a process to bid on the old means of assessing these areas in the event that bid proposals for a new type of assessment are time or cost-prohibitive. The Board wishes to maintain the current weight of these assessments in the overall accountability, but is willing to consider a new means for assessing that collects different information and measures performance in a different way. The Board wishes to assure that any new means of assessment is clearly focused on relevance and would prefer, if possible, that it provide some time relief to schools and students.

8. The KBE wishes staff to include in the RFP a predictive measure of college success.

The Board supports the provision of a predictive measure of college success. The results of predictive assessments would be used to guide student course taking and to target areas for accelerated or specialized work by students.

9. The KBE will consider a change to the number of on-demand writing prompts or how we assess on-demand writing.

The Board would consider a change in the number and format of on-demand prompts, but would not be willing to increase the amount of time on the test attributed to on-demand writing to greater than the currently allotted ninety minutes. As NTAPAA indicated that more than a single prompt would be necessary to maintain validity and reliability, the Board prefers the use of a single long prompt and one or two shorter prompts. The Board prefers that students be given as much choice as possible (possibly three prompt choices) for the long prompt and that at the high school level the long prompt focus on analysis. A variety of formats may be explored for the shorter prompts.

10. The KBE has directed staff to make improvements in the Writing Portfolio process.

The improvements will include fewer student entries in the portfolio; a change from an holistic to an analytical scoring measure to provide more specific feedback to students and teachers; alignment at the high school level with expectations of higher education; more specific and increased professional development for teachers; revisions to statewide regulations; and dissemination of specific guidelines for portfolio administration to reduce the amount of inappropriate assessment practices relative to the portfolio.

Charts indicating testing times and number/type of questions at each grade plus a description of the model can be found on the Department's website at <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Kentucky+Board+of+Education/June+8-9%2c+2005+Kentucky+Board+of+Education+Regular+Meeting+Agenda+and+Agenda+Book+Documents.htm> under the staff note titled Assessment Design Issues and the CATS RFP.

For more information on this topic, contact Bill Insko or Roger Ervin at (502) 564-2256 or via email at binsko@kde.state.ky.us or rervin@kde.state.ky.us.

NUTRITION REGULATION REVIEWED BY BOARD

The Kentucky Board of Education reviewed proposed amendments to 702 KAR 6:090, Minimum Nutritional Standards for Foods and Beverages available on public school campuses during the school day, at its June meeting. The proposed amendments are the result of requirements contained in Senate Bill 172, passed by the 2005 General Assembly. The bill takes effect on June 20, 2005.

Kentucky Department of Education staff shared with the Board that Senate Bill 172 language requires that the Kentucky Board of Education promulgate an administrative regulation specifying “minimum nutritional standards for all foods and beverages that are sold outside the National School Breakfast and National School Lunch programs, whether in vending machines, school stores, canteens, or a la carte cafeteria sales.” The bill’s language also reads that the “administrative regulation shall address serving size, sugar, and fat content of the foods and beverages.” Department staff recommended that the Board amend the current 702 KAR 6:090 as a vehicle to meet the Senate Bill 172 mandate.

Several issues were raised by interested constituent groups including whether the statute directed the Board to develop requirements that applied to only elementary schools or to all schools. The Management Support Committee of the Board reached consensus that the Board must follow what the actual legislative language says and determined it applied to all schools. Other issues included: (a) the need for more input from constituent groups; (b) the amount of reporting required by districts; (c) the portion size limit, particularly on beverages; (d) foods/beverages as rewards for classroom behavior; and (e) a la carte items on the cafeteria line and whether the regulation needs to address these.

The Board directed Department staff to pursue further changes to the regulation by: (a) having face-to-face meetings with constituent groups in an effort to reach logical compromises, where possible; (b) allowing local flexibility for handling issues not specified by the statute; (c) supporting recommendations that come to the Board through data, where available; and (d) addressing only foods and beverages outside the federal National School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs. The regulation will come back to the Board’s Management Committee in August and could either be given final approval at that time or sent back to Department staff for further work.

For more information on this item contact Paul McElwain at (502) 564-2256 or via email at pmcelwai@kde.state.ky.us.

BOARD HEARS UPDATE ON REFOCUSING SECONDARY EDUCATION

The June update on refocusing secondary education was composed of two parts, a report from students who conducted focus groups across the state on the kind of schools students need, and discussion of a work plan/timeline from Department staff for addressing refocusing secondary efforts.

The student presentation was given by Andrew McCormick and Meredith Geers, seniors from North Oldham High School, who conducted focus groups in the Pike County Schools, Graves County Schools, Warren County Schools, Ft. Thomas Schools and Kenton County Schools. Some of the key themes from the focus groups relative to the kind of schools students need included:

- Structuring the CATS test more like the SAT or ACT would benefit Kentucky's students by promoting a higher level of learning and familiarizing them with an important test format.
- Student incentives, such as KEES money for high-scoring students, would remove some of the burden from high schools.
- Because finding guidance counselors is becoming an increasingly difficult task, schools should utilize numerous advisors who will be able to devote time and attention to students.
- Teachers also need to be brought into the mix. By familiarizing themselves with the complexities of college applications, etc., teachers will be able to be even more valuable resources to their students.
- Students need more options in terms of college credit and foreign language courses. These courses should be offered in an effective classroom environment.
- Students almost invariably supported block schedules similar to North Oldham's, which employs five classes each semester, for a total of ten classes per year. This is successful because North measures performance against standards, awarding credit for performance, not seat-time.
- Classes in high demand should be offered in more than one block, to suit the needs of every student. Independent studies should not be left out of the question, further enabling every student to build the transcript he or she wants.
- While it would be dangerous to hold all students to high standards in all types of writing, it would be helpful for college-bound students if the writing portfolio were refined and personalized to include more relevant styles of writing like essays and research papers.
- Kentucky must ensure that each school offers a breadth of elective options that include in-depth courses. These courses should expand on ideas in both the related arts and core-subject curricula.
- Senior projects and internships are great examples of how to ensure that students will be passionate about their studies. The idea is to give as many students as many opportunities as possible.

- Individual Learning Plans should be implemented as an effective tool for students and counselors to ensure that every student receives a personalized education that is best-suited to their individual needs.
- Plans will have to be comprehensive, charting a course that brings in everything from classes to extracurricular activities to the writing portfolio.
- The Plans should be the result of collaboration between a student and his or her advisor, with whom they have meaningful relationship.
- While there is no set way of doing this, every high school should implement a system of core requirements that will ensure the mastery of important subjects by all of Kentucky's students.
- Kentucky needs to do everything it can to find those teachers and those administrators who will be devoted to providing students with the best high school experience.
- Deliberate and effective transitions must be created between the middle schools and the high schools in every county throughout Kentucky.
- Material covered in the freshman year of high school should be a direct continuation of the concepts learned in middle school. New concepts should be introduced only when students have the background needed to understand these new concepts.
- Middle and high school curricula must be carefully compared to ensure that the freshman year continues middle school concepts.
- A middle and high school in close proximity that have a common identity and work together to see every student through to the end are especially indicative of a strong transition into the high school years.
- It's important for schools to foster connections between middle and high school students. Mentor programs are especially effective in creating meaningful relationships between students of different ages, something that is empowering to younger students.
- The common school identity generates support for the entire campus throughout the community. This community support creates an environment in which students feel valued and therefore, desire to stay in school.

As to the work plan/timeline for guiding the refocusing secondary effort, the major initiatives included creating the public will for change, clarifying and raising expectations, individualizing learning and creating meaningful relationships for all students and aligning existing policy with the secondary agenda. The Board expressed interest in focusing more on relationships of students and teachers, providing schools

with options that have worked in other schools, understanding what policy actions can be taken by the state board in order for changes in schools to occur, working with the Education Professional Standards Board on preparation of teachers to teach in this new environment and specifying the role of an expanded Individual Graduation Plan in a changed school environment. The Board expressed a sense of urgency for the high school refocusing work and asked that revisions occur on the work plan in order to bring it back to them in August.

For more information on this item, contact Linda Pittenger at (502) 564-4772 or via email at lpitteng@kde.state.ky.us.

REPORT ON CLOSING THE OVERALL ACHIEVEMENT GAP AND PROPOSED PLAN FOR CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES HEARD BY STATE BOARD

Since closing the achievement gap is one of the Board's 2005-06 priorities, a presentation on closing the overall gap plus a proposed plan for closing the gap for students with disabilities was timely. The first part of the presentation was led by Associate Commissioner Steve Schenck and focused on the work of the Department's five Achievement Gap Coordinators. Highlights of their work included:

- Facilitating and supporting the efforts of schools and districts to eliminate the gap
- Building the capacity for whole-school improvement
- Serving as a communication link from the Department to the field and for the field to speak in return to the Department
- Developing networks for sharing professional development and strategies to reduce the gap
- Assisting schools and districts in targeted long-term planning

Additionally, the data on the overall achievement gap was shared with the Board. The data can be found on the following website under the agenda item entitled "Closing achievement gaps in Kentucky's schools and Proposed Plan for closing the achievement gap for students with disabilities".

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Kentucky+Board+of+Education/June+8-9%2c+2005+Kentucky+Board+of+Education+Regular+Meeting+Agenda+and+Agenda+Book+Documents.htm>

The second part of the presentation specifically targeted the gap for students with disabilities with a proposed plan for reducing this gap. Associate Commissioner Johnnie Grissom brought the plan forward as a result of previous discussions with the Board's KSB/KSD Committee on the special education achievement gap. The plan dealt with the following five essential components:

- To effectively close achievement gaps, education policy makers and practitioners at every level must commit to a thorough examination and understanding of all issues related to *organizational and school culture*.
- Closing the achievement gap for students with disabilities must be guided by *processes, policies and procedures*, just as processes, policies, and procedures guide other educational goals and priorities at the school, district, and state levels.
- Targeted, high quality *professional development* designed around *effective programming* must be provided in schools where significant special education achievement gaps exist. Literacy efforts must be addressed to ensure all students have a firm foundation in order to be successful in school across all content areas.
- The Kentucky Department of Education, local school districts, individual schools and communities must join forces and develop systems that promote *collaborative approaches* to serving students with disabilities. It should be commonplace for students with disabilities to have access to rigorous curriculum in the regular classroom setting with specially designed services provided by highly trained special education teachers within that setting.
- Schools, local school districts, and the Kentucky Department of Education must intentionally *target human and fiscal resources*, in ways that ensure and accelerate achievement for students with disabilities in order for them to reach proficiency by 2014 and beyond.

The plan further divided recommendations into plans of action for the state board, Kentucky Department of Education and local schools/districts.

At the end of the discussion on the achievement gap, the Board requested that the Department staff roll the work on the total achievement gap and on the gap for students with disabilities into one plan and bring it back to the Board in August.

For more information on this item, contact Steve Schenck at (502) 564-2116 or via email at ssckenck@kde.state.ky.us or Johnnie Grissom at (592) 564-4970 or via email at jgrissom@kde.state.ky.us.

OTHER ITEMS ON WHICH THE BOARD TOOK ACTION IN JUNE WERE:

- Minutes from the April 6-7, 2005, and May 17-18, 2005, regular meetings
- Certification of non-public schools
- Non-public preschool and kindergarten voluntary recognition process
- Appointments to the State Textbook Commission
- Revisions to 703 KAR 5:001, Assessment and Accountability Definitions; 703 KAR 5:020, The formula for determining school accountability; and 703 KAR 5:130, School district accountability (All Final)

- District facility plans for Butler, Bourbon, Calloway, Owsley, Powell, Russell and Whitley Counties and East Bernstadt and Ludlow Independents
- District facility plan amendments for Bardstown Independent and Jefferson County
- Certification of school district eligibility to participate in the Urgent Needs School Trust Fund
- KETS FY06 Unmet Need for LEAs
- 702 KAR 5:080, Bus driver qualifications, responsibilities and training (Final)
- KHSAA Board of Control appointment of Dr. Steve Parker
- Election of NASBE officers
- Payment of NASBE dues
- Amendments to KBE Policy Manual
- 2005, 2006 and 2007 meeting dates

OTHER ITEMS REVIEWED IN JUNE WITH NO ACTION TAKEN WERE:

- Letter to Senator Mitch McConnell to eliminate the reduced-price category in school nutrition programs
- Termination of Floyd County State Assistance designation
- KDE Employment Report
- Follow-up discussion on 2005-06 KBE priorities
- Budget priorities discussion
- Update on implementation of the Secondary GED program
- Status report on Title IX deficiencies for schools audited during the 2004-05 school year
- 2004 district audit process and proposals for refinement
- Hearing Officer's Report
- Special education issues study session

KBE MEETING DATES 2005

<u>2005</u>	<u>Type of Meeting</u>	<u>Location</u>
August 3-4, 2005	Regular meeting and commissioner's evaluation	Frankfort
October 5-6, 2005	Regular meeting	Frankfort
November 2, 2005	Regular meeting	Frankfort
December 7-8, 2005	Regular meeting	Frankfort

KBE MEETING DATES 2006

<u>2006</u>	<u>Type of Meeting</u>	<u>Location</u>
January 4, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
February 1-2, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
March 8, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
April 11-12, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
May 10-11, 2006	KBE retreat and strategic plan discussion	*TBD
June 13-14, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
July 5, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
August 2-3, 2006	Regular meeting and commissioner's evaluation	Frankfort
September 6, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
October 4-5, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
November 1, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort
December 6-7, 2006	Regular meeting	Frankfort

*TBD – To be determined

PROPOSED KBE MEETING DATES 2007

<u>2007</u>	<u>Type of Meeting</u>	<u>Location</u>
January 10, 2007	Regular meeting	Frankfort
February 7-8, 2007	Regular meeting	Frankfort
March 7, 2007	Regular meeting	Frankfort
April 4-5, 2007	Regular meeting	Frankfort
May 9-10, 2007	KBE retreat and strategic plan discussion	*TBD
June 13-14, 2007	Regular meeting	Frankfort
July 11, 2007	Regular meeting	Frankfort
August 8-9, 2007	Regular meeting	Frankfort
September 5, 2007	Regular meeting	Frankfort
October 3-4, 2007	Regular meeting	Frankfort
November 14, 2007	Regular meeting	Frankfort
December 6-7, 2007	Regular meeting	Frankfort

For more information on the meeting dates, contact Mary Ann Miller at 502-564-3141 or via email at mmiller@kde.state.ky.us or Susan Palmer at 502-564-3141 or via email at spalmer@kde.state.ky.us.

The actions described above were taken in open session of the Kentucky Board of Education at the June 8-9, 2005, regular meeting conducted in the State Board Room, Capital Plaza Tower, 1st Floor, Frankfort, Kentucky. This information is provided in summary form, and an official record of the meeting is available on tape in the permanent records of the Kentucky Board of Education, First Floor, Capital Plaza Tower, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601. These records are open for inspection Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

For additional information about the Kentucky Board of Education meetings, agendas, minutes or special accommodations needed for attending meetings, contact Mary Ann Miller, Policy Advisor at (502) 564-3141.

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